

Professor Brian Bailey (foreground) and graduate student Chris McDowell stand in the Cube on at Beckman Institute on Tuesday night. Students from the class "Walking Through Knowledge Networks" showed their semester's work pairing 3-D visualization technology with the arts and humanities.

Class puts knowledge networks in 3-D

Projects use Cave, Cube to make 'fully-immersive' representations

BY IMRAN SIDDIQUEE
The Daily Illini

Twenty-five students enrolled in "Walking through Knowledge Networks," a one-of-a-kind interdisciplinary course, and displayed their final projects in the Beckman Institute on Tuesday night.

Professor of speech communication Noshir Contractor, one of three professors involved in the project, said the class was funded by the Silicon Carbon Culture project, a cam-

pus-wide initiative to increase the interplay between the arts, humanities, sciences and technology.

"This is the only class of its kind, with 25 students from four different colleges," Contractor said. "Every team of students has people from every department, and everyone plays a role."

The students involved in the class were required to come up with a 3-D representation of a "knowledge network," any network where some form of knowledge is being shared,

Contractor said.

Jack McCabe, sophomore in LAS, said he enrolled in the class with no expectations but ended up with a valuable experience.

"It was interesting — definitely different than any other class I've ever taken," McCabe said.

The Beckman Institute is one of four institutions in the world with capabilities for fully immersed 3-D projects, Contractor said.

Benjamin Schaeffer, staff member at Beckman Institute, said the

students were using three state-of-the-art rooms at the Institute: The Cave, the Cube and the NCSA display wall were used in the class.

"The Cube and the Cave are the fully immersive 3-D rooms and they consist of a bunch of screens surrounding a person and then drawing images from that person's head to create point-of-view," Schaeffer said.

The user must wear special glasses that project different images for

more 3-D on 6

The Daily Illini

Film: Israel through students' eyes

"Sometimes people think there's only one way to do things. This event is an effort

the Jewish, Muslim, Baha'i and Christian religions. Several students sang songs from

least feel like there's something you can do," Haggag said.

Students puts projects in 3-D

3-D from 1

the left and right eyes to complete the 3-D visualization, Schaeffer said.

Christine Catanzarite, coordinator of the Silicon Carbon Culture project, said she was very excited about the progress of both the class and the project as a whole.

Catanzarite said almost 60 faculty members were involved in this project, and that the teachers and students from different disciplines

had worked well together.

Apart from the class, there were several other things in the project the University hoped to expand upon, she said.

"One of the projects involves working with middle school girls and introducing them to science and technology so as to increase interest at that age," Catanzarite said. "Another one centered in LAS will present an exhibition at Krannert in 2004."

Graduate student Aby Rao, a teaching assistant for the net-

works course, said the class introduced him to fields he would have never explored, which had influenced his research.

"I have based one of my projects on this class and it has introduced me to a world of virtual reality that I've never even thought of," Rao said.

Contractor said there were no plans to repeat the course or to introduce similar classes, but the idea was on the table.

"As of now, it's a one-time thing, but I think it's been a huge success," he said.

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